(d) Does not arise.

(e) Following steps are being taken by the Government to maximize wheat procurement in the Rabi Marketing Season (RMS) 2008-09:

(i) To encourage farmers to grow more wheat, the Minimum Support Price (MSP) for wheat has been fixed at Rs. 1000 per quintal for RMS 2008-09 which is Rs. 250 per quintal more than that for RMS 2007-08.

(ii) Export of wheat on private account has been banned till further orders. Wheat exports from Central Pool are also banned.

(iii) Import of wheat on private account a zero duty has been permitted till further orders.

(iv) Import of 23 lakh tonnes of wheat was done during 2007-08 which improve the stock position in the Central Pool.

A notification requiring furnishing of return to Secretary, Department of Food of the State Government in case of purchase (by any Company or Firm or individual) of wheat beyond 10,000 tonnes and to the Central Government in case of purchase of wheat beyond 25,000 tonnes has been issued. The above returns will indicate from where maximum quantities have been purchased.

(f) 23 lakh tonnes of wheat was imported during 2007-08.

(g) Wheat production targets for the agriculture year 2008-09 are fixed before the start of the agriculture year.

Improvement of PDS in rural areas

840. SHRI M.V. MYSURA REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to revamp and improve the Public Distribution System in the country particularly in the rural areas;

(b) if so, the details of steps taken to improve the Public Distribution System in the country during the year 2007-08; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) Reforming of the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) to improve its efficiency, accountability and effectiveness is an ongoing process. The Government has been taking up a series of measures to improve the TPDS in rural as well as urban areas.

The TPDS is operated under joint responsibility of Central and State and UT Governments. The Central Government is responsible for procurement, storage and allocation of foodgrains upto the Principle Distribution Centres (PDC) in the States/UTs State and UT Governments are responsible for identification of BPL, families, issuance of ration cards to eligible families, lifting of foodgrains and distribution through the network of 4.94 lakh Fair Price Shops scattered all over the country.

Major steps taken by Government for improving the TPDS are these:

(i) A 9-point action plan has been under implementation by State/UT Governments. This has resulted in improvemnt in its functioning in terms of detection and elimination of bogus/fake ration cards, involvement of Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), setting up Vigilance Committee, door delivery of foodgrains, etc.

(ii) Concurrent evaluation of TPDS has been taken up in 26 States and UTs through NCAER and IIPA, New Delhi.

(iii) A revised Citizens' Charter has been issued in July, 2007 for adoption and implementation by State/UT Governments for facilitaing use by citizens of provisions of Right to Information Act, 2005 in relation to functioning of TPDS.

(iv) To ensure that TPDS foodgrains reach the targeted families and to minimize scope for their diversion, APL allocations have been rationalized.

(v) Training Programmes for TPDS functionaries and Awareness campaign for TPDS beneficiaries are being taken up.

(vi) Computerization of TPDS has been initiated.

(vii) Use of new technologies such as Global Positioning System is being piloted.

(viii) Revised policy on distribution of wheat flour has been issued.

Ban on export of oilseeds and edible oils

841. SHRI T.T.V. DHINAKARAN: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to recommend ban of export of oilseeds and edible oil to contain domestic prices;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (c) Government have not taken any decision to ban export of oilseeds and edible oils as on date.

Quality of imported wheat

†842. MISS ANUSUIYA UIKEY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the quality of imported wheat is being questioned;

(b) whether it is costly, too; and

(c) whether Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh has complained against biased treatment in terms of foodgrain distributions?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) No, Sir. However, a complaint

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.